

(b) and (c) Yes, Sir. Action is underway to procure and supply appropriate bi-lingual computer software to the offices of Ministry of External Affairs for enabling enhanced use of Hindi. This would also help in faster communication of messages and other texts in Hindi through the modern channels of communication, namely, E-mail and fax.

#### **Non-Deposit of EPF of Employees**

5083. SHRI JAGAT VIR SINGH DRONA : Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government are aware that the employers of Artherten Mill, Kanpur, U.P. have not deposited Rupees 2.40 crores of EPF of labourers and nor sent its audit report to the commissioner's office since 1991 resulting in loss of hope in the workers to receive their money;

(b) if so, whether the Government propose to make any efforts for preparing the balance sheet depositing the amount of EPF and for distribution of salary in time; and

(c) if so, the time by which it will be done ?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR (SHRI M. ARUNACHALAM) : (a) Yes, Sir. Employers of Artherten Mill, Kanpur (UP) have not deposited the P.F. dues to the tune of about Rs. 2.50 crores and have also not submitted returns to P.F. Office since 1991-92.

(b) and (c) At present, the establishment is registered with BIFR for rehabilitation. While Government is fully committed to ensure payment of salary to the workers in time, at times there are delays in making such payments due to financial constraints. Account slips for the year 1990-91 have been issued to the employees. Account slips for the subsequent years can be issued only on receipt of the subscription from the management.

#### **Outstanding Customs/Excise Duty**

5084. SHRI MAHESH KUMAR M. KANODIA : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) the amount of outstanding Customs/Excise duty as on date;

(b) whether the Government machinery have failed to recover this outstanding amount of customs duty;

(c) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(d) the remedial measures taken in this regard ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI M.P. VEERENDRA KUMAR) : (a) to (d) The information is being collected and will be laid on the table of the House

#### **Implementation of Reservation**

5085. SHRI RAM TAHAL CHAUDHARY : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government are contemplating to draw a panel to review the measures being taken to fill up the reserved posts;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI S.R. BALASUBRAMONIYAN) : (a) to (c) It will not be in the public interest to give information in regard to composition, terms of reference etc. of the Cabinet Committee.

[English]

#### **Implementation of Labour Laws in the Industries**

5086. SHRIMATI GEETA MUKHERJEE : Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state :

(a) whether majority of industries in Delhi are not paying minimum wages to its workers and the labour courts had totally failed in their duty of implementing various labour laws;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps proposed to be taken to see that various labour laws are strictly implemented by the industrialists ?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR (SHRI M. ARUNACHALAM) : (a) As per information received from the Government of Delhi majority of industries in Delhi are paying minimum wages, though from time to time a few complaints regarding non-payment of minimum wages by the employers are also received.

(b) and (c) During the year 1996, 7194 complaints regarding non/less payment of minimum wages were received by the Government of Delhi. In 1187 cases, the employers rectified the shortcomings and an amount of Rs. 48,36,495/- was got paid to the workers. The prosecutions were launched against 429 defaulting managements for violation of various provisions of the Minimum Wages Act. The enforcement machinery, in order to secure effective implementation of Minimum Wages Act, make regular inspection of the establishments covered under the Act and take necessary action whenever any violation of the Act comes to their notice.

#### **Benami Accounts in Banks**

5087. SHRI I.D. SWAMI : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to refer to the reply given to Unstarred Questions No. 432 and 1119 dated November 22, 1996 and February 28, 1997 regarding "Benami accounts in Banks" and state :

(a) whether the information has since been collected;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the action taken by the Government to remedy the situation ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI M.P. VEERENDRA KUMAR) : (a) Yes, Sir. Information has since been collected and is given below.

- (b) (i) Bank of India has informed that at their Opera House Branch 22 accounts reportedly of benami type were alleged to have been opened.
- (ii) State Bank of Saurashtra has informed that 4 (four) accounts of Fort Branch, 2 (two) accounts of Darbargadh (Bhavanagar) branch and 1(one) account of Nilambaug Chowk branch reported of benami type were alleged to have been opened. Department of Enforcement is investigating the details regarding four accounts of their Fort Branch.
- (iii) Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has informed that according to Standard Chartered Bank, 14 (Fourteen) accounts of their Dr. D.N. Road Branch, M.G. Road Branch and Chowpatty Branch came to adverse notice for heavy cash deposits and/or remittances against suspected fraudulent documents.
- (iv) RBI has reported that according to Sangli Bank they do not have benami accounts at its Fort Mumbai Branch.

(c) Bank of India and State Bank of Saurashtra have informed that branches had opened these accounts only upon fulfilling the laid down guidelines such as obtaining proper introduction and following norms for depositing cheques and permitting withdrawals. Hence, no action is deemed necessary against officials concerned for opening those accounts. RBI has informed that according to Standard Chartered Bank all the fourteen accounts were duly introduced by other banks or by existing account holders. However, subsequent verification of some of the addresses given in the account opening forms revealed that these were addresses of business centres where there had been arrangements by the account holder to get the mail. In some cases the account opening procedures had not been strictly completed with and appropriate disciplinary action will be taken by the bank. However, there was no evidence of collusion of staff with account holders.

RBI has informed that to check the incidence of benami accounts the banks have been instructed to introduce a system of obtaining photographs of persons authorised to operate the new deposit-accounts with effect from 1st January, 1994. Further in terms of letter dated 17.10.94 all the public sector banks have been advised by RBI to get independent confirmation of addresses of account holders in all cases.

Bank of India, State Bank of Saurashtra and Standard Chartered Bank have reported that instructions are issued to all the branches from time to time to strictly follow the laid down guidelines for opening new accounts and also monitor all the newly opened accounts closely for any suspicious transaction.

### Oil Exploration

5088. SHRI P.R. DASMUNSI : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government propose to allow participation of Indian Public Sector Petroleum Companies in the Equity participation programme in abroad to float the companies business with overseas arrangements;

(b) the special measures taken in this regard;

(c) whether the total approach as envisaged by the Government in the Seventh and Eighth Five Year Plans for ultimate self-sufficiency in the oil exploration programme step by step had not taken off; and

(d) if so, the reasons therefor and the remedies ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI T.R. BAALU) : (a) and (b) ONGC Videsh Ltd. (OVL) is engaged in pursuing opportunities for acquiring equity oil abroad. It had entered into Production Sharing Agreements for exploration in Vietnam, Yemen, Egypt and Tunisia. It is also exploring for contracts in Kazakhstan, Iraq etc.

(c) and (d) In the VII Plan the exploratory drilling targets in terms of wells were achieved by ONGC, though there was shortfall in meterage. In the VIII Plan the targets in exploratory drilling could not be achieved. Govt. has announced various rounds for participation by private companies in oil exploration. Recently the New Exploration Licensing Policy has also been announced to significantly boost exploration efforts in the country. The endeavour for going into deep water exploration and continuing exploration in frontier basins, in addition to undertaking new technology areas like Coal Bed Methane, are some of the initiatives to augment exploratory efforts in domestic acreages in the IX Plan.

[Translation]

### Beedi Workers

5089. SHRI DADA BABURAO PARANJPE : Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state :

(a) whether thousands of beedi workers from almost every part of the country had organised a rally in Delhi during March on call from Akhil Bhartiya Beedi Workers Federation;

(b) if so, the details of their demands; and

(c) the reaction of the Government thereto ?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR (SHRI M. ARUNACHALAM) : (a) Yes Sir.

(b) and (c) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

### Eastern Gandak Hydro Power Project

5090. DR. M.P. JAISWAL : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) whether all units of Eastern Gandak Hydro Power Project at Balmiki Nagar in Bihar set-up with the loan of Japan Government have started functioning;